

JAMES B. WILSON AND MARGARET POWELL WILSON

James B. Wilson, son of James Thomas Wilson and Isabella Ross Wilson, was born 808

MIDWAY BIOGRAPHIES

809

Mr. Wilson gave a set of
Encyclopedias to the Tithing
office to be used as reference
Material



August 22, 1856, Carson City, Nevada. Married Margaret Powell September 29, 1881, in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. She died and he married Hannah Lundin November 24, 1915. He died January 20, 1949, Midway.

Margaret Powell Wilson, daughter of Reese Powell and Margaret Morgan Powell, was born September 2, 1858, Llansawel, Carnarthenshire, South Wales. She died July 30, 1913, Midway.

Hannah Lundin, daughter of Andrus Gustof Lundin and Johanna Anderson Lundin, was born October 21, 1878, Dormosyo, Grasenbergo, Sweden. She died December 21, 1959.

James B. Wilson, who pioneered in Wasatch County as a farmer, livestock man and community worker, came of Scotch-Irish stock. His great, great paternal grandfather was born in Scotland, but later moved to Ireland where James Thomas Wilson, father of James B., was born and reared. Isabella Ross, Mr. Wilson's mother, came of Scotch ancestry. Both families became converts to the restored gospel and emigrated to "Zion." James Thomas arrived in Utah with a pioneer company on September 3, 1852, and the Ross family reached Salt Lake City in September, 1854.

James T. Wilson and Isabella Ross were married November 16, 1855, and in the spring of 1856 were called to the Carson Valley Mission and settled in Carson City, Nevada, then still a part of the Utah Territory. In a rugged, primitive environment, in dire poverty, James B. Wilson, first child of this young couple, was born.

As a result of the approach of Johnson's army in 1857, the Carson Valley colonists were called back to Salt Lake City. Then began a series of severe experiences for survival. The Wilson family moved to San Pete County where the father gathered saleratus and old grease from which he made

soap. He peddled this product and home knit underwear to eke out an existence. In 1859, the family moved to Cache Valley, but returned to Salt Lake City in 1860. There on June 29, 1865, Isabella Ross, the twenty-nine year old mother died, leaving five children.

All was not on the dreary side in this period, however. In his early teens James B. heard Martin Harris, one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, bear his testimony to the divinity of that book. He also often heard the ringing exhortations of President Brigham Young and other church leaders. From these experiences coupled with his home training, he developed a faith that constantly grew throughout his long life. His formal schooling was meager, being completed with his "graduation" from the University of Utah after a few months of study in the winter of 1875-76. However, through constant self-improvement he became a truly educated man.

In early manhood Mr. Wilson taught school in Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County. At eighteen years of age he hauled timber, salt, and ore by ox team at \$6.00 per ton. It took a week for the trip from Salt Lake to Park City and return.

In 1875 Mr. Wilson became interested in cutting and hauling timber to the Alta mines. With his brother, Thomas R., he began timber operations in 1876. He pursued this work for several years and the timber cut in the "White Pines" was hauled by ox team to the Park City mines.

James B. Wilson's first visit to Midway dates back to 1872-73 when during a short sojourn there as a youth, he became interested in the farm he later homesteaded.

On September 29, 1881, Mr. Wilson married Margaret Powell, a cultured young Welsh immigrant, who came to Utah with her parents in 1873.

In November, 1884, the Wilson family took up permanent residence in Midway. Mr. Wilson homesteaded the tract of land upon which he set his heart in his youth. In 1885, the young homesteader "broke up" twenty acres of virgin soil with a hand plow drawn by oxen. This arduous toil continued year after year until the entire 160 acres were under cultivation. Beginning in 1885, Mr. Wilson and Fredrick Remund, a neighboring homesteader, built the Pine Ditch which had its source about one mile

up Pine Creek and extended around the side hills to the new farm.

From his homestead beginnings, Mr. Wilson and his sons branched out into an expanding farm and livestock program. The firm of James B. Wilson and Sons became one of the West's leading land and livestock operations. In the 1920's their bands of sheep numbered many thousands, their cattle hundreds of head and their land holdings consisted of thousands of acres and stretched for miles across the northern part of the Provo Valley.

James B. Wilson had a distinguished public career. Beginning in 1885, he served two terms as Justice of the Peace. He assisted in the organization of the Midway Irrigation Company. He helped organize and was president of the Midway Land and Livestock Company. In 1900 he was elected to the Midway town board and for fourteen years served as its president. When the town funds were insufficient to hire a marshal, Mr. Wilson filled that position without pay. During his administration as board president the first telephone service was brought to Midway. This was made possible through the citizens of Midway digging the holes and providing and setting the poles. As Midway town president, he with other community leaders, directed a successful campaign for the establishment of a municipal power plant. He also took the initiative in securing a spring from which water was conveyed to a sprinkling system in the Midway cemetery.

An active Republican in politics, he had a long career as a state legislator. Between 1903 and 1931, he served in eight legislative sessions over a period of sixteen years. While serving as a lawmaker, he was a leader in the move to build a new state capitol. At that time the state used part of the City and County building in Salt Lake City. He sponsored and guided the bill which made possible the development of Memorial Hill in Midway and helped to get certain Wasatch County roads into the state system.

Mr. Wilson was a loyal member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He became a charter member of the MIA while residing in the Salt Lake 12th Ward. For many years he acted as a ward teacher in Midway under Bishops David Van Wagoner and John Watkins. He served for thirteen years (1904-1917) as a counselor

to Bishop Jacob Probst of the Midway Second Ward and twenty years (1917-1937) on the Wasatch Stake High Council. In 1925 and 1926, and again in 1927-28, he filled short term missions to the Northwest. He crowned his church work with seven years of labor as an ordained worker in the Salt Lake Temple. This service terminated in 1944 when he was 88 years old.

As a family man, Mr. Wilson sought to inculcate into the lives of his children an appreciation of life's fundamental values. While outwardly somewhat stern, this man had a deep, tender affection for his wife and family. This was evidenced by his devotion to her during her long illness in 1912-13, culminating in her death July 30, 1913.

Margaret Powell Wilson was a native of Wales and began life in a beautiful old home that had been occupied by the mother's family for generations. Margaret's parents were devout Christians, the father serving as chorister for the Baptist church.

However, shortly after the marriage of Margaret Morgan and Reese Powell in 1848, a new influence came into their lives. Elders of the Mormon church converted them to the Latter-day Saint faith. Their three children, Elizabeth, David and Margaret, were baptized as they reached the customary age. The nearest branch of the church was fifteen miles from the Powell home and the family frequently walked both ways to attend services. Margaret's mother was unswerving in her loyalty to the new faith and was eager to join the body of the church in Utah. Elizabeth came to America in 1872 and in August, 1873, the parents with David and Margaret, arrived in Salt Lake City.

The new home in "Zion" was a two-room adobe house built and paid for by Margaret's brother, David. The family were members of the Salt Lake Fifteenth ward in which many Welsh converts, former friends of the Powells, lived. At the age of eighteen, Margaret joined the Relief Society organization.

Margaret's mother never enjoyed robust health. Not long after arriving in Salt Lake, she contracted a severe cold from which she never fully recovered. For several years she was an invalid. Margaret was her nurse and constant companion until her mother's death on July 8, 1880.

It was sometime prior to this that Mar-

garet met her future husband, James B. Wilson.

On September 29, 1881, James B. Wilson and Margaret Powell were married in the old Endowment House by Joseph F. Smith. However, Margaret's tender ministrations for her parents were not yet complete, for her father lived with the newly wed couple until his death February 11, 1882.

James B. and Margaret Wilson established their first home in Salt Lake City, but this they vacated and gave to Mr. Wilson's father when he returned homeless from a pioneering experience in Mesa, Arizona. Although unaccustomed to anything but urban life, Mrs. Wilson with her husband moved to a lonely homestead in Midway in 1884.

In the spring of 1891, the Wilson farm home and furnishings were destroyed by fire. A home in the town of Midway was then established. Mrs. Wilson was a woman of unusually good judgment not only in business affairs, but also on the problems of life. For years she conducted a neighborhood store in part of her two room home. The income from this store, supplemented by the proceeds from farm products, provided a large portion of the family support until the farming and livestock operations of her husband and sons were well established. She was an active Relief Society worker and served on the Old Folks Committee in Midway. Her life was dedicated to quiet service for her family, her neighbors, the sick and the poor. Mr. Wilson married Hannah Lundin November 24, 1915. She was a well educated woman. She was an efficient, capable stenographer when she met and married Mr. Wilson. She was an active worker in the Church and was devoted to her husband to the end.

She and Mr. Wilson reared two children after their marriage, Eugene Orgill, a nephew of Mrs. Wilson and Barbara whom they adopted.

Children of James B. and Margaret Powell Wilson were:

James Brigham, Jr., married Lota Huffaker;
Mrs. William G. (Edna) Young;
David J., married Mary Jacobs;
Mrs. Wayne B. (Belle) Hales;
R. Arthur, married Eva Huber;
Mrs. Grant Y. (Edith) Anderson.